

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO067
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Name of Service:	Lilliputs Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Lugatemple, Claremorris, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F12 KW30
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Name of Registered Provider:	Veronica McLoughlin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate TUSLA, Child and Family Agency 2 nd Floor, St Mary's HQ Castlebar Co Mayo
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable

Not Applicable

Description of service

The service is a privately owned and operated sessional childcare service. A session is provided in the morning from 09:00-12:00 for children aged between two and six years of age. The service is provided in a dedicated section of the registered providers home, located in a rural setting near the town of Claremorris in Co. Mayo. There is one playroom with direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area where the children have access to outdoor play equipment and planting areas.

Staffing

Three adults work in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children and a relief staff member.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 19, 25, 26 and 28, however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. These findings

are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 (1) record of a preschool child.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The registered provider is the designated person in charge in the service and a named person is available to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) (a) (b).

The records of three adults employed in the service were reviewed.

Four written and verified past employer references and two references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of the three adults employed in the service.

(c) A garda vetting disclosure was available for the three adults in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for two of the adults.

(d) International police vetting documents were available on file for one adult who lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months when over the age of 18 years.

(4)
Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the three staff who worked directly with the children.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the following policies and procedures were in place as per schedule 5 for the service. The policies, procedures and statements were consistent with the service practices.

- (a) Statement of purpose and function
- (b) Complaints policy
- (c) Administration of medication policy
- (d) Infection control policy
- (e) Managing behaviour policy
- (g) Fire safety policy
- (h) Inclusion policy
- (i) Outings policy
- (j) Accident and incident policy
- (s) Settling in policy
- (t) staff training policy
- (u) Supervision policy

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained. There were fifteen children present on a sessional basis aged from two years six months to four years old with two staff members caring for the children.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
 - (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of
2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

The inspector reviewed a random sample of ten children's records. The records contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information was made readily available for inspection in the service by the registered provider on request.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained for the required period of 2 years.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

Basic needs

- During the inspection the children ate a snack which consisted of fruit, yogurt, crackers, ham, sandwiches and cheese provided by the parents of guardians, seated at low tables and chairs and supervised by the adults who gave assistance where it was needed and encouraged conversation with the children during mealtime.
- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snacks without being rushed. The atmosphere during snack time was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement in the preschool room and outdoor area. They were able to explore several different interest areas while outdoors.
- In the playroom, the children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of a child size couch in a designated cosy area.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move around to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.

Supporting relationships

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
- The staff were actively involved in children's play, where appropriate initiating games and joining in when invited to by children.

- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.
- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures and body language.
- Soft tones were used with the children, along with the child’s individual name, getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- Staff guided and supported children who needed more help. Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion for example using personal greetings, news of the day, looking at family photographs, choice board, visual routines chart and giving appropriate encouragement.
- Staff communicated with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child’s interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life and any other concerns at drop off and collection times, by phone and by text.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling and initiating games and activities.

Physical and material environment

- The enclosed outdoor environment provided children with activities and opportunities for fresh air, discovery, active sensory and imaginative play. There was an outdoor sheltered space with a toy kitchen, shop, building blocks, home corner and books which allowed for all weather play. In addition to this space was a covered area with a mud kitchen and a track and sand box.
- Children were observed to play on ride on toys, a seesaw, climbing frames and a wooden bridge to develop their gross motor skills.
- The children spent time digging up vegetables they had grown in the vegetable patch. The staff used this opportunity to teach and nurture emerging interests in growing vegetables and meal preparation.
- The outdoor space had numerous areas of play to allow for both individual and group play.
- The staff ensured children had access to a variety of clothing for example, waterproof coats and trousers, and appropriate wellingtons and footwear for outdoor play.
- Visual aids in the form of picture and word reminders and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning. Displayed on the walls were themes including we are family, my body,

sea animals, summer, we are learning to count, the solar system, the four seasons, and visual aids such as 'I cover my cough', 'I listen quietly' etc.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available, but the date was greater than 3 years for one staff member. This vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous 3 years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

A copy of the renewed garda vetting disclosure dated 20/01/2025 was submitted to the Inspectorate.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider have adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

1) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid was immediately available to the preschool children attending the service.

There are two adults employed in the service trained in First Aid Response with an expiry date of October 2025 and July 2026.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available and it was stored safely on a high shelf in the playroom.

The first aid box had adequate supplies for the number of children attending.

(b)The first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A written record was available to demonstrate monthly fire drills completed in the service with the last fire drill completed on 15/01/2025.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the last annual service 29th August 2024.
- (4) There was evidence of the fire evacuation procedures setting out the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire in each of the playrooms and in the entrance lobby.

Non-Compliance Information

- (b) Records of the annual servicing by a competent person, in relation to the premises smoke and fire detection system were not completed since installation of a new fire detection system in August 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A certificate of maintenance servicing of the fire detection system was submitted to the Inspectorate with a service date of 22/01/2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

Certificate submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider have adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 03/10/2025, was for a sessional service, for a maximum number of 22 children. The insurance covered the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.